

VZCZCXRO6041
OO RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHNH
DE RUEHGO #1679/01 3171015
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 131015Z NOV 06
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5415
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1238
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0015
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 4391
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 3614
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 7113
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 4723
RUEHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA 0049
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA 0976
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 0980
RUDKIA/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 0716
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHDC
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHINGTON DC
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA
RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 001679

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/MLS; PACOM FOR FPA; USDA FOR FAS/PECAD,
FAS/CNMP, FAS/AAD, APHIS; BANGKOK FOR USAID:JMACARTHUR,
APHIS:NCARDENAS, ESTH:JWALLER AND CDC; CDC ATLANTA FOR CCID
AND COGH

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [AMED](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [CASC](#) [TBIO](#) [KFLU](#) [BM](#)
SUBJECT: BURMA: AI UPDATE

REF: A. RANGOON 1503

[1](#)B. RANGOON 1249

RANGOON 00001679 001.2 OF 002

[1](#)1. (U) Summary: GOB authorities have not reported any new cases of Avian Influenza in Burma since the outbreak in poultry in Mandalay and Sagaing Divisions was contained in April 2006. On October 30, the government imposed a ban on the import and use of AI vaccine, as well as on animal bones and meat powder. The UN's Senior Coordinator on AI, David Nabarro, visited Burma in mid-October and praised Burma's cooperation with WHO and FAO on AI issues. WHO and FAO conducted a series of workshops on vaccination contingency plans, surveillance, and early warning. End summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) On October 30, the GOB imposed a ban on the import and use of AI vaccines in Burma. Dr. Maung Maung Kyin, former Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department (LBVD) epidemiologist and current FAO advisor, explained that the GOB would only use vaccination as a final measure, if all other efforts to contain a future outbreak have failed. He said that commercial poultry farmers want to vaccinate their flocks, but the government refused to approve vaccine imports, and advised poultry breeders not to vaccinate.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Authorities warned that if a private breeder violated the ban, the GOB would cull all poultry and evacuate people in the affected area. The LBVD currently inspects all large farms every three months and issues "AI-free" certificates. LBVD plans to extend the inspection program to small and medium-sized farms soon. Maung Maung Kyin admitted that farmers may attempt to smuggle the vaccine illegally

over the border, but, he said, the GOB had a good chance to detect any vaccination efforts through its regular program of sero-surveillance of poultry. LBVD also instituted a ban on the import of animal bones and meat powder to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

International Cooperation Continues

¶4. (U) Two representatives from RAND, including one American, joined international experts and local facilitators at a tabletop exercise on October 16. On 18 October, David Nabarro, the UN Senior Coordinator for Avian Influenza, visited Burma as part of a regional trip. He met with WHO, UNDP, Ministry of Livestock and Ministry of Health officials, as well as representatives of key donors. Nabarro later told reporters that he was impressed by the high level of vigilance in the country, and praised Burma for its open and cooperative approach on AI issues.

¶5. (SBU) With Japanese funding, FAO and LBVD hosted a workshop to develop animal vaccination contingency plans for Burma on October 24 and 25. An American consultant to FAO, David Castellan, led sessions on "Role and Use of Vaccination in Current OIE and FAO Recommendations for the Prevention and Control of HPAI H5N1," and "Contingency Plan for Control of HPAI H5N1 in Burma." On November 8, LBVD Director General Maung Maung Nyunt told econoff that he had just received agreement in principle from the Minister of Livestock and Fisheries to adopt Castellan's Vaccination Contingency Planning recommendations.

¶6. (SBU) On November 8-10, AusAID funded a FAO/LBVD workshop on Surveillance and Early Reporting of HPAI, and Dr. Castellan led sessions on Epidemiology, Field Investigations, and Laboratory Training Needs. In the opening address, Maung Maung Nyunt reiterated the GOB's commitment to following

RANGOON 00001679 002.2 OF 002

ASEAN, OIE, FAO and Kunming Initiative guidelines. On the margins of the workshop, Maung Maung Nyunt told us that the Yunnan government had provided 200,000 Yuan to equip four labs LBVD had constructed on the Burma/Thai and Burma/China borders. LBVD personnel stationed at these labs conduct active and passive surveillance of the surrounding farms, as well as checking poultry imports and exports. The DG also said he plans to attend a JICA-sponsored meeting on the Thai/Burma border to address trans-boundary AI issues, and a meeting about migratory wild birds and AI in early December.

Compensation Begins

¶7. (U) At an earlier meeting with emboff, Maung Maung Nyunt described the GOB's compensation plan for farmers affected by the extensive culling carried out in March and April to eradicate AI-infected poultry. The government has begun to give affected farmers long-term leases for plots of land on the outskirts of their villages. The GOB hopes to encourage the creation of poultry zones further away from population centers. The DG said that many villagers do not want farmers to establish poultry farms within village limits. Farmers will also be eligible to receive free or discounted day-old chicks, building materials, and electricity from the GOB. The FAO provided funding for the purchase and import of breeding chicken pairs to begin local production of day-old chicks. LBVD also has distributed cell phones to farm extension workers to facilitate communication and reporting on AI in rural areas.

¶8. (SBU) Comment: The GOB continues to work closely and cooperatively with international organizations and foreign governments to strengthen its ability to identify and combat AI. It knows it has a long way yet to go, but readily accepts and adopts international recommendations and guidelines. LBVD and Ministry of Health officials make a point of thanking the US for reacting first to the March-April outbreak and for our expertise in the field. The

mid-level bureaucrats and technicians who attend FAO- and WHO-sponsored workshops do not have much decision making authority, but are sending evaluations and recommendations to those who do. The GOB also appears willing to cooperate with the country's neighbors, who are both a potential source of AI transmission across the border and are the most immediately vulnerable to new AI outbreaks originating in Burma. End comment.
VILLAROSA